

her daughter changed religions/husbands
stabilized now with 2 granddaughters
a house overlooking the beach
her son moved around
had lots of jobs/breakdowns
it was alcohol & women
in the midst of all this
was/is the family bully
endlessly congratulating herself
for being strong
for being a good mother
for being healthy & stable
for being honest
monologues are her specialty
it's taken me years
to give up my seat
at all of her performances

Monty wasn't all that jaunty

he had a sour stomach
his burps were more like gasps
he farted constantly
gastric distress
his frustrations settled in his guts
by the time he reached his mid 50s
they had to open him up
found all that scar tissue
they had to remove a piece of him
as the years passed
they would open him up some more
then came the colostomy
he lived with that
until he could no longer
hold down any food
he summarized his appearance in one word
Auschwitz
he kept telling me to kill him
but the idea of serving
on a chain gang in Florida
to alleviate the suffering of a dying man
seemed a little excessive at the time

grounds for optimism

the future is never more
than one second away